

Corresponding Author. Email: yulisna_englishdepartment@yahoo.co.id.
Phone number: +6285668811223

Academic Journal

**THE READING ABILITY OF FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS AT SMP
NEGERI 2 SINGKEP: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

YULISNA, MASHYUR, M. NABABAN

Faculty of Teacher's Training and Education
University of Riau

Abstract

This research aimed to find out the reading achievement of second year students in reading narrative, descriptive, and recount text and to find out whether or not there is a significant difference in reading achievement between the female and male students. The subjects were 25 females and 25 males of second year students of SMP N 2 Singkep. The research instrument used in collecting the data is a reading test in form of multiple choices. The data found were analyzed by using t-test. The results showed that from 50 students, there were 10 students (20%) considered into Good to Excellent level. Next, 26 students (52%) considered into Average to Good. Then, there were 10 students (20%) considered into Poor to Average. The rest of them, 4 students (8%) were considered into Poor level. Finally, the writer found that the students' ability was classified in Average to Good level and there was no significant difference between the female and male students, in 5% level significant, $t_t = 2.01$, 1% level significant, $t_t = 2.68$. It can be seen: $2.01 > 1.99 < 2.68$. Because t_0 or t_{obs} that writer computed was 1.99, meanwhile $t_t = 2.01$ and 2.68, it accepted the null hypothesis because t_0 or t_{obs} was lower than t_t or t critical.

Keyword: Comparative study, Reading ability, T-test

INTRODUCTION

Reading cannot be separated in our life if we do not want to be left behind in term of information. It is a sort of activity in which a reader needs to understand about what ideas that the writers want to convey. So, reading is very important for us in adding knowledge.

According to Harmer (1990:1) in Ferdalina (2009:6), reading is an exercise dominated by eyes and brain. The eyes receive messages and the brain is functioned to work out the significance of these messages and require the students to read for meaning.

Reading is one of four skills of English subject that should be studied in School Based Curriculum for Junior High School. For second year students, they have to study about descriptive, recount and narrative text in semester 1 and 2. In this research, the writer would focus on the students' reading ability of those three texts since the SMP N 2 students have studied about that.

Generally, female and male students study in the same class. There is no sex segregation in treatment. There is also no consideration of the sex background. Therefore, there is no sex segregation in the classroom that brings about different success in learning achievement of the sex group. (Afrizona, 2011:2).

On the contrary, there was a journal investigated by Xin Xiong entitles "**A Comparative Study of Boys' and Girls' English Study Differences**". It emphasizes the point of *English Educational Psychology* and from it we can see that the motivation factor, ability factor and intellect factor affect the students' English learning most. The total of sample in this study is 105 male and 105 female of middle school boy and middle school girl. The researcher used questionnaires (to know the motivation difference), made comparison English study performance (to know the ability difference) and intelligence test (to know the intellect difference). The research finding shows that the female students performed better than male students in that all aspect. In conclusion, from the comparison of the male and female motivation factor, ability factor, and intelligence factor, they have obvious gender differences and all these factors affect the English learning. (*ISSN 1798-4769, JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH, Vol.1, No.3, pp. 309-312, May 2010*)

When the writer interviewed the English teacher in SMP Negeri 2 Singkep, the teacher said that the female students performed better than male students while reading English Texts. Perhaps, it happened because the female students understand English better than the male students. The students' understanding in studying English has a strong relationship with their reading ability because if they understand English, they will get easier to understand English written texts as well.

Based on the description above, the writer was interested in investigating a research entitles: "The Reading Ability of Female and Male Students at SMP Negeri 2 Singkep: A Comparative Study."

METHODOLOGY

This is a comparative research in which the researcher would like to know the ability of female and male students by looking at their reading achievement and comparing that achievement to find out whether there is a significant difference or not. It also used qualitative hypothesis since the researcher wanted to know their ability differences in reading narrative, descriptive, and recount text. The population in this research was the second year students of SMP N 2 Singkep in academic year 2011/2012. To take sample, the

writer used non-random technique by choosing the students from two classes (VIII 1 and VIII 2). In getting the data, the writer used the reading test as an instrument in order to know students' ability in reading narrative, descriptive, and recount text.

The procedures used are as follows:

1. The writer tried out 30 students of class VIII 3 to know the reliability of test before the test given to the samples.
2. The writer gave the test to the class VIII 1 and VIII 2 and asked them to answer 30 questions of multiple choice tests in 90 minutes.
3. Finally, after their answer sheets were collected, the scores were classified to know their ability and were analyzed by using t-test to know the significant difference between the female and male students.

To find out the score of students' ability, the writer used the table follows:

Table 1

No	The Classification of Scores	Level of Ability
1.	80-100	Good to Excellent
2.	60-79	Average to Good
3.	50-59	Poor to Average
4.	0-49	Poor

(Harris, 1974:179)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The scores of female and male students could be seen as following:

Table 2

The Female Students' Score of Reading Test

No.	Female Students (X ₁)	Correct Answer	Score
1	F1	27	90
2	F2	24	80
3	F3	24	80
4	F4	24	80
5	F5	24	80
6	F6	22	73
7	F7	22	73
8	F8	22	73
9	F9	22	73
10	F10	22	73
11	F11	22	73
12	F12	21	70
13	F13	21	70
14	F14	21	70
15	F15	20	67
16	F16	20	67
17	F17	20	67
18	F18	20	67
19	F19	19	63
20	F20	19	63
21	F21	18	60
22	F22	17	57
23	F23	17	57
24	F24	17	57
25	F25	17	57

The table above shows that the highest score of female students is 90 and the lowest score is 57. After that, the mean or average score of female students:

$$M_1 = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$M_1 = \frac{1740}{25}$$

$$M_1 = 69.6$$

So, Mean (the average score) of female students (M_1) = 69.6. It means that they are in average to good level.

Table 3

The Male Students' Score of Reading Test

No.	Male Students (X_2)	Correct Answer	Score
1	F1	28	93
2	F2	26	87
3	F3	26	87
4	F4	26	87
5	F5	24	80
6	F6	23	77
7	F7	21	70
8	F8	20	67
9	F9	20	67
10	F10	20	67
11	F11	19	63
12	F12	19	63
13	F13	18	60
14	F14	18	60
15	F15	18	60
16	F16	17	57
17	F17	17	57
18	F18	16	53
19	F19	15	50
20	F20	15	50
21	F21	15	50
22	F22	13	43
23	F23	12	40
24	F24	10	33
25	F25	10	33

The table above shows that the highest score of male is 93 and the lowest score is 33. The mean or average score of male students of SMP N 2 Singkep:

$$M_2 = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$M_2 = \frac{1554}{25}$$

$$M_2 = 62.16$$

So, Mean of male students (M_2) = 62.16. It means that they are in average to good level. From the data above it can be seen that mean score of female students is 69.60 and male students is 62.16.

To know whether there is any significant difference between the two groups of sample, it is necessary to conduct a test of null hypothesis.

The test used is used t-test as shown in the following formula:

$$t_0 = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{SE_{M_1 - M_2}}$$

Where:

- t_0 = t-test
- X = the mean of student' score
- $M_1 - M_2$ = the average score of male (1) and female (2)
- $SE_{M_1 - M_2}$ = standard error of differences between means.

Before the t-test is used, the data collected are transformed into other formulas. The first formula is to find the mean of each group and standard deviation (SD). The value of the mean has been found as follows:

$$M_1 = 69.60$$

$$M_2 = 62.16$$

The next is to find the standard deviation both of them (female and male students) with the steps below:

$$SD = \frac{\sqrt{\sum X - \bar{X}}^2}{N - 1}$$

Standard deviation of female students:

Table 4

The Female Individual Score Deviation in Reading Test at SMP N 2 Singkep

Female Students	X	\bar{X}	$X_1 = (X - \bar{X})$	$X_1^2 = (X - \bar{X})^2$
F1	90	69.6	20.4	416.16
F2	80	69.6	10.4	108.16
F3	80	69.6	10.4	108.16
F4	80	69.6	10.4	108.16
F5	80	69.6	10.4	108.16
F6	73	69.6	3.4	11.56
F7	73	69.6	3.4	11.56

F8	73	69.6	3.4	11.56
F9	73	69.6	3.4	11.56
F10	73	69.6	3.4	11.56
F11	73	69.6	3.4	11.56
F12	70	69.6	0.4	0.16
F13	70	69.6	0.4	0.16
F14	70	69.6	0.4	0.16
F15	67	69.6	-2.6	6.76
F16	67	69.6	-2.6	6.76
F17	67	69.6	-2.6	6.76
F18	67	69.6	-2.6	6.76
F19	63	69.6	-6.6	43.56
F20	63	69.6	-6.6	43.56
F21	60	69.6	-9.6	92.16
F22	57	69.6	-12.6	158.76
F23	57	69.6	-12.6	158.76
F24	57	69.6	-12.6	158.76
F25	57	69.6	-12.6	158.76
Total				$\sum (X-\bar{X})^2 = 1760$

Standard deviation of female students:

$$SD_1 = \frac{\sqrt{\sum X-\bar{X}^2}}{N-1}$$

$$SD_1 = \frac{\sqrt{1760}}{24}$$

$$SD_1 = \sqrt{73.3}$$

$$SD_1 = 8.56$$

So, standard deviation of female students is **8.56**

Standard deviation of male students:

Table 5

The Male Individual Score Deviation in Reading Test at SMP N 2 Singkep

Male Students	X	\bar{X}	$X_2 = (X - \bar{X})$	$X_2^2 = (X - \bar{X})^2$
F1	93	62.16	30.84	951.11
F2	87	62.16	24.84	617.03
F3	87	62.16	24.84	617.03
F4	87	62.16	24.84	617.03
F5	80	62.16	17.84	318.27
F6	77	62.16	14.84	220.23
F7	70	62.16	7.84	61.47
F8	67	62.16	4.84	23.43
F9	67	62.16	4.84	23.43
F10	67	62.16	4.84	23.43
F11	63	62.16	0.84	0.71
F12	63	62.16	0.84	0.71
F13	60	62.16	-2.16	4.67
F14	60	62.16	-2.16	4.67
F15	60	62.16	-2.16	4.67
F16	57	62.16	-5.16	26.63
F17	57	62.16	-5.16	26.63
F18	53	62.16	-9.16	83.91
F19	50	62.16	-12.16	147.87
F20	50	62.16	-12.16	147.87
F21	50	62.16	-12.16	147.87
F22	43	62.16	-19.16	367.12
F23	40	62.16	-22.16	491.07
F24	33	62.16	-29.16	850.31
F25	33	62.16	-29.16	850.31
Total				$\sum (X - \bar{X})^2 = 6627.48$

Standard deviation of male students:

$$SD_2 = \frac{\sum X - \bar{X}^2}{N - 1}$$

$$SD_2 = \frac{6627.48}{24}$$

$$SD_2 = 276.15$$

$$SD_2 = 16.62$$

So, standard deviation of male students is 16.62

The next step is to compute the standard error (SE) of the difference between means, with the formula as follow:

$$\begin{aligned}
 S (M_1-M_2) &= \sqrt{\left[\frac{SD}{N_1}\right]^2 + \left[\frac{SD}{N_2}\right]^2} \\
 &= \sqrt{\left[\frac{8.56}{25}\right]^2 + \left[\frac{16.62}{25}\right]^2} \\
 &= \sqrt{\left[\frac{8.56}{5}\right]^2 + \left[\frac{16.62}{5}\right]^2} \\
 &= \sqrt{13.89} \\
 SE &= 3.74
 \end{aligned}$$

The standard error of the difference mean between female and male students is 3.74.

After knowing the Mean (X) and Standard Error (SE) between two means, the value is transformed into t-test by using the formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_0 &= \frac{M_1 - M_2}{SE_{M_1-M_2}} \\
 &= \frac{69.6 - 62.16}{3.74} \\
 &= \frac{7.44}{3.74} \\
 &= 1.99
 \end{aligned}$$

The last step is to find the number of degree of freedom by using the formula below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 df &= (N_1+N_2) - 2 \\
 &= (25+25) - 2 \\
 &= 48
 \end{aligned}$$

The result of degree of freedom is 48.

The number of degree freedom is 48. Based on the critical value table “t” so, the critical value of “t” is 2.01 at the 5% or 0.05 level of significant and 2.68 at the 1% or 0.01 levels significant. In other words, we can say that:

- In 5% level significant, $t_t = 2.01$
 - In 1% level dignificant, $t_t = 2.68$
- It can be seen: $2.01 > 1.99 < 2.68$

Because t_0 or t_{obs} that writer get is 1.99, meanwhile $t_t = 2.01$ and 2.68, it accepts the null hypothesis because t_0 or t_{obs} is lower than t_t or t critical. It means that there is no significant difference in reading skill between the female and male students of SMP N 2 Singkep.

The information of the average (mean) score and standard deviation of reading test of female and male students can be seen on the following table:

Table 6
Mean and Standard Deviation of Reading Achievement

Group	N	M	SD	t_0	t_t
Female	25	69.6	8.56	1.99	2.01 and 2.68
Male	25	62.16	16.62		

The table shows that the average score of female students is 69.6 while the average score of male students is 62.16. The standard deviation of female students is 8.56 while the standard deviation of male students is 16.62 with t_0 of female and male students are 1.99. For 48 df value is 2.01 in 5% level significant and 2.68 in 1% level significant.

The writer found out the null hypothesis is accepted because t_0 is 1.99 is lower than t_t 2.01 and 2.68.

Table 7
The Classification of Female Students' Ability in Reading Test

No.	Female Students (X_1)	Correct Answer	Score	Classification of Ability
1	F1	30	90	Good to Excellent
2	F2	24	80	Good to Excellent
3	F3	24	80	Good to Excellent
4	F4	24	80	Good to Excellent
5	F5	24	80	Good to Excellent
6	F6	22	73	Average to Good
7	F7	22	73	Average to Good
8	F8	22	73	Average to Good
9	F9	22	73	Average to Good
10	F10	22	73	Average to Good
11	F11	22	73	Average to Good

12	F12	21	70	Average to Good
13	F13	21	70	Average to Good
14	F14	21	70	Average to Good
15	F15	20	67	Average to Good
16	F16	20	67	Average to Good
17	F17	20	67	Average to Good
18	F18	20	67	Average to Good
19	F19	19	63	Average to Good
20	F20	19	63	Average to Good
21	F21	18	60	Average to Good
22	F22	17	57	Poor to Average
23	F23	17	57	Poor to Average
24	F24	17	57	Poor to Average
25	F25	17	57	Poor to Average

This table shows that the classification of female students' ability, where 5 female students are classified into Good to Excellent level, 16 female students are Average to Good and the last 4 students are classified into poor to average level. It also means that most female students are classified into Average to Good level.

Table 9
The Classification of Male Students' Ability in Reading

No.	Male Students (X ₂)	Correct Answer	Score	Classification of Male Students
1	F1	28	93	Good to Excellent
2	F2	26	87	Good to Excellent
3	F3	26	87	Good to Excellent
4	F4	26	87	Good to Excellent
5	F5	24	80	Good to Excellent
6	F6	23	77	Average to Good
7	F7	21	70	Average to Good
8	F8	20	67	Average to Good
9	F9	20	67	Average to Good
10	F10	20	67	Average to Good
11	F11	19	63	Average to Good
12	F12	19	63	Average to Good
13	F13	18	60	Average to Good
14	F14	18	60	Average to Good
15	F15	18	60	Average to Good
16	F16	17	57	Poor to Good

17	F17	17	57	Poor to Good
18	F18	16	53	Poor to Good
19	F19	15	50	Poor to Good
20	F20	15	50	Poor to Good
21	F21	15	50	Poor to Good
22	F22	13	43	Poor
23	F23	12	40	Poor
24	F24	10	33	Poor
25	F25	10	33	Poor

The table above shows the classification of male students' ability, where 5 students are classified into Good to Excellent level, 10 students are in Average to Good level, 6 students are in Poor to Good, and the last 4 students are classified into Poor level. It also means that most male students are classified in Average to Good level.

The percentage of the total classification of the students score can be seen as follows:

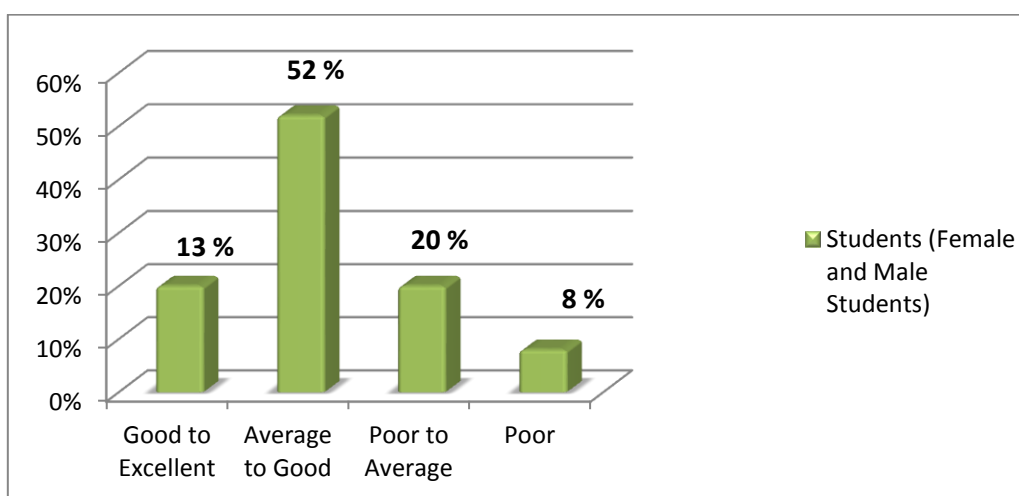
The formula:

$$P \% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

With the formula above, the percentages of the total classification of the students score can be seen as the figure below:

Figure 1

The Percentage of Students' Classification in Reading Achievement



The figure above shows that the percentage ability of students (female and male students) in reading achievement is in Average to Good level is highest than others, such as Good to Excellent, Poor to Average, and Poor. This also means that female and male students' ability in reading is in Average to Good level.

CONCLUSION

The writer conducted this research to know the students' ability in reading narrative, descriptive and recount text and to find out whether or not there was a significant difference between the female and male students. Based on the data analysis, the researcher got the conclusions as following:

- The ability of second year students of SMP N 2 Singkep was considered in Average to Good level ($M = 65.88$)
- The female students' achievement was higher than male students' achievement. We could see from the Mean Score ($M_1 > M_2 = 69.60 > 62.16$)
- The highest score of the male students was 93 and the lowest score was 33.
- The highest score of the female students was 90 and the lowest score was 57.
- Although the female students' reading achievement was higher than the male one, there was no significant difference between them. It was proved statistically by the value of t_{obs} is lower than critical value (t_t) in this research. $t_{obs} = 1.99$ is lower than $t_t = 2.01$ and 2.68 , ($2.01 > 1.99 < 2.68$)

SUGGESTION

In line with the conclusion, the writer would like to give some suggestions as follows:

- The reading score of the students of SMP N 2 Singkep have not been maximal since there are only some students who could pass the test based on the Criteria of Minimum Standard (75). So, they should study English more and more. In this case, if they have understood about English language, they are supposed to get easier in comprehending texts in English. Commonly, the students who have a good reading comprehension also have a good reading achievement.
- It is better to consider that school boys and school girls are importantly formed in Indonesia in term of separating classes to female and male students for study. It should be done because they have different ways of study, motivation, ability, intellectual, and interest. Hence, the teachers only focus on each. Particularly for reading subject, the teacher can choose their techniques of teaching reading based on what the researchers found better to apply whether for the male students or for female students.
- In addition, the researcher hopes that this research finding can be guidance for others. There are no perfect scientific researches in this world because new theories always appear together with the development of sciences. So, the researcher really hopes that the next researchers will find many new interesting things to investigate as well.

REFERENCES

- Azhar, Fadly**, 2006. *Panduan Penulisan dan Pelaksanaan Ujian Skripsi pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni FKIP UNRI*. Pekanbaru.
- Damaiyanti, Muthia**. 2007. *A Study on the Second Year Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Text at SMAN 7 Pekanbaru*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Burnes**. 1985. *Reading Theories*. <http://www.mahdum.yolasite.com>. Retrieved on March 2, 2012.
- Eskey**. 1970. *Meaning of Reading*. <http://www.nadaisland.com>. Retrieved on March 2, 2012.
- Fitri, Maida**. 2009. *A Study on the Ability of the Sixth Year Students of SD N 050 Pekanbaru*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Ferdalina, Hesti**. 2009. *A Study on the Ability of the Second Year Students of SMA N Siak Hulu in Identifying the Features of Text*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Hardian, Riski**. 2010. *A Study on the Ability of the Second Year Students of SMA YLPI Perhentian Marpoyan Pekanbaru in Comprehending Hortatory Exposition Texts*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Li, Fenfang**. 2010. *A Study of English Reading Strategies Used by Senior Middle School Students*. China: Chongqing Yangtze Normal University. www.ccsenet.org/ass. Retrieved March 4, 2012.
- Netra, Drs. I.B.** 1974. *Statistik Inferensial*. Surabaya: Usaha Nasional.
- Pangastuti, Dwiko**. 2011. *A Study on the Students' Reading Ability in Narrative Text by the First Year Students at SMP N 1 Sedinginan*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Poole, Alex**. 2009. *The Reading Strategies Used by Male and Female Colombian University Students*. USA: Western Kentucky University. www.redalyc.org. Retrieved March 6, 2012.
- Puspita, Nur**. 2012. *A Comparative Study of Using Features of Descriptive Text between the Female and Male Students' Achievements of SMP IT Ar-Royan Pekanbaru*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Rohmad, Nor**. 2010. *The Use of Jigsaw in Improving the Second Year Students Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Texts at SMP IT Al-Ihsan Kabupaten Kampar*. Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Shumaimeri, Dr. Yousif A.N Al**. *Gender Differences in Reading Comprehension Performance in Relation to Content Familiarity of Gender-Neutral Texts*. Saudi Arabia: Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, King Saud University. <http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/yousif/publications>. Retrieved March 10, 2012.
- Smith, Tony**. 2004. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Eleventh Edition)*. Oxford University Press. Email: tony@werdz.com.

- Trisna, Afrizona Niken.** 2011. *A comparative Study of Identifying Features of Recount Text Achievement between the Female and Male of Second Year Students of SMP N 13 Pekanbaru.* Pekanbaru: Teachers' Training and Education Faculty of English Study Program, Language and Arts Department, University of Riau.
- Wardiman, Artono. , Masduki B. Jahur, M. Sukirman Djusma.** 2008. *English in Focus for Grade VIII Junior School.* Bandung: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- Xiong, Xin.** 2010. *A Comparative Study of Boys' and Girl's English Study Differences.* China: Foreign Studies College of Hunan University of Arts and Science. Email: xiongxin73@163.com
- Zaida, Nur.** 2009. *Practice Your English Competence for SMP/MTs Clas VIII.* Jakarta: Erlangga.